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BOROUGH OF SOUTHWOLD
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
1953



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Arthur C. Gee, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health

BOROUGH OF SOUTHWOLD

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1953

To: The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the
Borough of Southwold

Your Worship, Councillor Mrs. Laight and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report on the Health of the Borough for the year 1953.

The major event in the life of the Borough in 1953 was, of course, the flood at the end of January. This affected every aspect of the Borough's activities, and it had naturally numerous repercussions in the public health sphere.

Your Medical Officer being, as you are aware, Medical Officer to neighbouring Authorities as well as to your Borough, was kept well occupied with the difficulties of his other equally affected Authorities, and it was not until the Monday that he was able to visit the Borough in person. In the meantime, the Town Clerk had taken the initiative of warning the populace by loudspeaker van that the sewage disposal system was out of action, and that drinking water should be boiled before use.


This action adequately covered the immediate public health measures necessitated by the emergency.

As all stranded persons had found shelter with friends, no emergency rest centre or other accommodation needed to be established by the Local Authority, but mention must be made of the rest centre set up by Mrs. J.B. Critten at The Homestead, which was open from 11 p.m. on the Saturday night until 4 p.m. on the Sunday. From here, blankets and clothing were issued to eleven stranded families and food-stuffs were provided from Red Cross supplies.

The worst affected parts of the town were the Ferry Road area and Blackshore. Severe flooding had also occurred to the north and west of the town. That at Reydon Corner blocked the entrance to the town which had virtually become an island.

On the Monday, a conference was held at the Town Hall at which the local situation was reviewed. Following a report of the Waterworks Manager, it was deemed safe to relax the instruction that drinking water required boiling, but it was thought advisable to double the normal amount of chlorine added to the water. Arrangements were made for numerous samples of drinking water to be taken throughout the Borough for testing for bacteriological safety. As a result of these samples further instructions were given by loudspeaker van that boiling of all drinking water should continue until further notice; evidence of possible pollution having shown up in several of the samples.

Casualties in the Borough amounted to five. All were from drowning in the Ferry Road area, where the property is of the lightly constructed summer chalet variety. This property received the full force of the



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Medical Officer of Health Annual Report 1953 cont.

gale and was also further damaged by waves coming over the beach between them and the sea. In all some forty-nine properties were affected.

Periodical sampling of the water supply was continued to ascertain the extent of the pollution. In the course of these investigations your Medical Officer became concerned at certain aspects of the Waterworks procedure. A thorough inspection of the plant was subsequently carried out by him and the Borough Surveyor in the presence of representatives of the Company. Following the inspection, certain recommendations were made to the Company, all of which have now been carried out to the satisfaction of your Medical Officer. A very much better control of the bacteriological purity of the water should now be possible.

Once again, a rise in the birth rate is recorded, thus continuing the trend observed during the past few years.

The death rate is much the same as last year.

The only infectious disease which showed much prevalence in the Borough during the year was measles. There were no cases of food poisoning recorded.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Registrar-General's estimated population (mid-1953) .. 2,407
 Number of inhabited houses as at 31st December 1953 .. 1,189
 Rateable Value as at 31st December 1953 £23,879

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS

		<u>Totals</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
LIVE BIRTHS	Legitimate	30	17	13
	Illegitimate	-	-	-
		<u>30</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>13</u>
		<u>Southwold</u>	<u>Comparative figure for England & Wales</u>	
BIRTH RATE per 1,000 estimated resident population mid-1953		12.55		15.5
STILLBIRTHS		Nil		
DEATH RATE per 1,000 estimated resident population mid-1953		13.29		11.4
DEATHS of INFANTS under ONE year of age.		Nil		
DEATHS from Puerperal causes		Nil		

Medical Officer of Health's Annual Report 1953 cont.

CAUSES OF DEATH

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Malignant neoplasm lung, bronchus	1	2	3
Malignant neoplasm breast	-	1	1
Malignant neoplasm uterus	-	1	1
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	3	4	7
Vascular lesions of nervous system	-	2	2
Coronary disease angina	3	-	3
Hypertension with heart disease	-	1	1
Other heart disease	-	3	3
Other circulatory disease	1	-	1
Other diseases of respiratory system	1	1	2
Nephritis and Nephrosis	1	-	1
Pneumonia	1	-	1
Hyperplasia of prostate	1	-	1
Accidents (excluding motor vehicle accidents)	1	4	5
	<u>13</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>32</u>

COMPARATIVE TABLE FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS

	<u>1949</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>
Population	2,443	2,449	2,441	2,419	2,407
Births	33	23	21	28	30
Birth rate per 1,000	13.5	9.4	8.6	11.2	12.55
Deaths	48	49	45	37	32
Death rate per 1,000	19.6	20.1	18.4	12.4	13.29
Infant Deaths	2	--	2	--	--
Infant Mortality rate per 1,000 live births	60.6	--	95.2	--	--

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following table shows the number of cases of Infectious Disease notified during the year compared with 1952:-

	<u>1953</u>	<u>1952</u>
Jaundice	1	1
Malaria	-	2
Measles	25	4
Pneumonia	9	8
Scarletina	2	-
Whooping Cough	-	3

Hospital treatment for those infectious diseases which cannot be treated at home now rests with the East Anglian Regional Hospital Board.

Details of the sanitary work carried out during the year are set out in the Sanitary Inspector's Report which follows herewith.

ARTHUR C. GEE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

BOROUGH OF SOUTHWOLD

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR
FOR THE YEAR 1953

To: The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors
of the Borough of Southwold

Your Worship, Councillor Mrs. Laight and Gentlemen.

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report on the sanitary conditions in the Borough for the year 1953.

FLOOD OF JANUARY 31/FEBRUARY 1st

The following is a report of the work which arose as a result of the disastrous flood which occurred on the night of January 31/February 1st.

(a) Water Supply

Owing to the possibility of contamination a notice was broadcast on Sunday, 1st February, by loudspeaker van within the Borough that all water should be boiled before use. This instruction remained in force until Wednesday, 11th February, on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health.

Eleven samples of water were obtained for bacteriological examination during the first week following the flood, two of which proved to be unsatisfactory and one suspect, but following the increased dosage of chlorine given by the Water Company, all subsequent samples proved to be satisfactory.

(b) Sewerage

The sewerage works remained completely submerged for two days, and approximately 50 feet of outfall pipe had been dislodged and scattered in the adjoining marsh. The South Green Pumping Station was put out of action and new machinery was installed and the pumps put into working order again on 9th February. By the 17th February the sewage works were functioning normally.

(c) Housing

All persons whose homes were lost or made uninhabitable by the floods were looked after by the Welfare Services, alternative accommodation being obtained for them. Furniture and chattels were salvaged by teams of voluntary and casual labour and all premises affected by the flood were cleared of mud, silt and shingle.

WATER SUPPLY

Twelve samples of water were submitted for bacteriological examination during the period May - December, all of which proved to be satisfactory.

Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report 1953 cont.

SEWERAGE

As a result of very severe rainstorms on 20th August and 17th September, the East Street sewer became surcharged and flooded the ground floor flat at No.5 Centre Cliff. Your Council authorised the fixing of an anti-flood valve in the inspection chamber close to the sewer and it is anticipated that no further flooding will take place.

HOUSE REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

Messrs. May Bros. continue to carry out this work and give every satisfaction.

All refuse is tipped but it can only be controlled to a limited extent owing to the lack of suitable covering material.

CONDEMNED MEAT AND OTHER FOODS

171 lbs. of home-killed meat were condemned during the year, due to bone taint.

The following tinned and other foods were also condemned:-

Condemned Tinned and other Foods

cooked ham	5 lbs. 4 ozs.
stewed steak	5 lbs.
steak in gravy	1 lb.
luncheon meat	5 lbs. 12 ozs.
minced meat loaf	1 lb. 12 ozs.
corned beef	12 ozs.
sausages	1 lb.
salmon	11 ozs.
prawns	27 lbs.
plums	27 lbs. 5 ozs.
prunes	3 lbs. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ozs.
grapes	1 lb. 4 ozs.
peaches	1 lb. 15 ozs.
baked beans	1 lb. 8 ozs.
margarine	3 qrs. 7 lbs.
evaporated milk	4 no. 2 pint tins.

CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS AND BAKERIES

These have all been found to be satisfactory.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS

No defects have been noted during the year.

Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report 1953 cont.

DAIRIES AND RETAIL PURVEYORS OF MILK

Three retail purveyors trade in the town. The two dairies have always been found to be in a clean condition.

HOUSING

During the year your Council erected one block of 4 houses - one 3-bedroomed and three 2-bedroomed types. They also provided 8 of their existing houses with bathrooms by means of a small interior alteration.

Appropriate action has been taken in the case of various private dwellings where defects have been found.

C.R. DRIVER

Sanitary Inspector

July 1954

